

John Longe

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A SHORT
ACCOUNT and DEFENCE
OF THE
ATHANASIAN CREED,

With respect to the
DOCTRINE of the TRINITY,
IN LETTERS
Occasionally written to his FRIENDS

BY
THOMAS TROUGHEAR, D. D.
Rector of Northwood, &c.
In the Isle of Wight.

Μη ὑπερφρονεῖν περ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ
σωφρονεῖν. Rom. 12. 3.

O X F O R D,
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A SHORT
ACCOUNT and DEFENCE
OF THE
ATHANASIAN CREED,

With respect to the

Doctrine of the TRINITY,
Imprimatur,

IN LETTERS
JO. BROWNE VICE-CAN.

Mar. 12. 1760.



THOMAS BROWNE D.D.
In the life of Wm. Browne

any correspondence with the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London, 1760.

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SIR,

TO what I have said in the following Letters, which were first published some Years ago in *Hooker's Weekly Miscellany*, and which you now advise me to reprint in the present Form, give me leave to premise by Way of Preface, that the chief and fundamental Article of the Christian Religion, upon which the Gospel Dispensation is founded, *viz.* God's sending his Son to take our Nature upon him in Order to redeem and sanctify it by his Blood; this Article, I say, is deny'd by our modern *Hereticks*, as it was by some in the primitive Church; for there were very early in the Church, as well as at this Day, such as oppos'd it, and thereby put quite another Face upon Christianity. They did, and some do now, interpret away that most glorious Manifestation God ever made of himself to Mankind. They shut their Eyes against those Mysteries, which are most clearly and expressely reveal'd to them in the

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Gospel,

Gospel, and have render'd the Church of
 Christ little more than a School of Philoso-
 phy. Nor is it Matter of Wonder, that they
 do so, if we consider, that *Arians* and *Soci-*
nians, instead of allowing the Scripture to be
 the Rule to form their Opinions by, have
 made their Opinions the Rule of interpreting
 Scripture, and that in Doctrines of the great-
 est Weight and Importance, even in Matters
 of Faith, and on which their eternal Salva-
 tion depends. And indeed this we must ex-
 pect; for St. *Paul* tells us, that Heresies shall
 be, and we may suppose that God permits
 them, that the Church may be still in a State
 militant here upon Earth. But it is our Duty
 to oppose and confute them. And our *Arians*
 and *Socinians* should consider; that if *Christ*
 be a Creature, how can God command all
 Christians to worship and adore him? as it is
 plain from Scripture he did, and the very An-
 gels too. So that if *Christ* be God, then these
Hereticks are to pay him Homage due to his
 Divinity. God can no more strip himself of
 his Sovereignty, than of his Being. He can
 as soon take a mere Creature to his Throne,
 as make over to one his peculiar Title to A-
 doration and Worship. God, we are told by
 the Prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. 42. 8. said, *I am*
 the

the Lord, that is my Name; and my Glory will I not give to another; as if he had said, My Name is Jehovah, which denotes me to be the only true God: And I will assert my Honour and not suffer false Gods or Creatures to usurp that Honour or Glory, which is due to myself alone; for so the Hebrew Word Cabod and Δοξα in the Septuagint do properly signify. Now it is certain, that our Saviour himself told the Jews, John 5. 25. that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father: and, that He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, which hath sent him. So that our Saviour must be the Jehovah, the Lord, equal to his Father as touching his Godhead. Besides we are assured, that the Apostles worshipped him at his Ascension, Luke 24. 52. As did also St. Stephen at his Death, and St. Paul at his Conversion. If therefore Christ was not God as well as Man, they were guilty of Idolatry. And what can clash more directly with all Laws natural and divine, than Idolatry does? If this spiritual Adultery be innocent, what can be criminal? and if God can command so sacrilegious an Action, what can he forbid? In short, God commanded all the Angels to worship Christ, Heb. 1. 6. He therefore must be God, as well as Man, as I

said before: *Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead*, though *inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood*. The *Jews* flattered themselves with a *Messiah*, who should make his Entrance among them in worldly Pomp and Magnificence, loaden with Spoils and most famous for his Conquests, making them thereby the Lords of the whole Earth. Now we assert that our *Jesus* was a most victorious *Messiah*, not such indeed as they expected; but wherein he differed, his Atchievements and Glories were singular and more conspicuous; He cured all manner of Diseases, raised the Dead, and triumphed over Devils. And never was there such a Defeat given, never thought of before, as when *Death* was overcome by dying, disarm'd by him, that seem'd its Prey and Prisoner, and when all the Powers of Hell were shaken and subdued by their own, as they thought, prosperous Stratagems. So that we may justly affirm that his divine Nature wrought the Miracles, and his human suffer'd the Afflictions, and that though the Temple of his Body seem'd to be destroy'd by Death; yet himself by his Divinity did on the third Day raise it up again for our Justification. The Body, it is true, fell, and the human Soul was separated from it, but his

his divine and human Natures still continuing united, his Godhead restored the one to the other; so that what he declared to the *Jews*, is most true, that he himself would raise it up again; and that *he had Power to lay down his Life, and had Power to take it again.* John 10. 18.

Another Argument for our Saviour's Divinity may be taken from what he condescended to do in Order to convince St. *Thomas* of the Truth and Reality of his Resurrection. He repeated the very Words, which he had said to his Brethren, which was a Proof of his Omnipresence and Omniscience, and he gave him such sensible Evidence of the Reality of his Body, as convinced and made him acknowledge, that a Person able thus to know his Words and Thoughts and raise himself from the dead, must needs be his very Master *Jesus*, and his very *Lord and God*. The Apostle, now fully convinced, admires and adores him, as the almighty and everlasting God. And indeed the Original here, as it is observed by some learned Men, is in Terms so strict and with such an Addition of the *Greek* Article, as some *Hereticks* even confess to be a Character of the Word *God* being taken in its

its proper and natural Sense, and intended of the only true God.

As to a farther Proof of our Saviour's Divinity, need I mention, that there are in the *Pentateuch* express Prophecies concerning him, which were punctually and literally fulfilled? Let any one read *Deut.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. and deny this, if he can. Here is a Prophecy delivered 1400 Years before the Event and literally fulfilled, as appears in the Gospel. If any Person would see or be fully acquainted with the Proofs taken from the old Testament of the Nature and Dignity of our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ* and of the Holy Spirit; I cannot do any Thing better than to recommend to him a serious Perusal of the eight Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the honoured Lady *Moyer*, by the very learned and worthy *James Knight*, D. D. Vicar of *St. Sepulchre's London*, whom I had the Honour to be acquainted with at *Oxford*, when he was Fellow of *St. John Baptist's College* there. On this Occasion also I take the liberty of recommending an accurate and excellent Performance of the Reverend *Dr. Randolph*, the present worthy President of *C. C. C.* in Answer to the late Bishop of *Clogher's* Essay on *Spirit*. And if any Person

is desirous to have a full and perfect Knowledge of the Nature of Christian Faith, let him read the Sermons preached at the Lady *Moyer's* Lecture by my old intimate Friend Dr. *Felton* Principal of *Edmund Hall*. He will there find the Christian Faith clearly and fully explained and asserted against *Deists*, *Arians* and *Socinians*; the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost fully and clearly proved, as also the Unity of the Godhead, as expressed in the *Athanasian* Creed: And he very justly observes, *Page* 429. that in this Controversy we cannot depart from this Creed without going into the *Arian* or *Socinian* Creed. And here give me Leave to observe, that in this Creed, as expressed in our Liturgy, there is not one Sentence that cannot be proved from Scripture; for even the *damnatory* Sentences, as they are usually called, may clearly and most expressly be proved from it. What in this Respect can be more clearly expressed, than in the Words of St. *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*, or condemned, *i. e.* in the Day of Judgment; for the *Greek* Verb, here used by the Evangelist, is used in *civil Courts*, and implies first, the pronouncing of Sentence upon a Malefactor,

factor by a Judge: and so it is used by our Saviour himself in St. *John's* Gospel, Chap. 8. 16. Again, secondly, this Greek Verb *κατακρίνω*, signifies a pronouncing of Sinners guilty, and adjudging them to Punishment upon Conviction of a Fault, as St. *Paul* seems to intimate in *Rom.* 8. 34. And here by St. *Mark* it is used in Opposition to the Greek Verb, which signifies to be saved. And what we are here told by St. *Mark* our blessed Saviour said to his Disciples, may be farther confirmed by what he said in *John* 3. 17, 18. For though the simple Verb *κρίνω* is here used by St. *John*, yet it is often in Scripture taken in the worst Sense for the compound Verb *κατακρίνω*, which properly signifies to condemn; as in *Rom.* 14. 3. and 2 *Thess.* 11. 12. where the Apostle's Words are very remarkable, and ought by every Christian to be remembered. *That all, says he, may be damn'd who believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness.* To what has been said upon this Point, I need only add what is said in the last Verse of this third Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* What I have now said or produced, sufficiently,

ficiently, I think, prove the Truth of what is asserted in this Creed with Regard to our Belief of the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity, and that it is still to be worshipped by us. This is the Catholick or true Christian Faith, which it is necessary that we should constantly hold. And here I may observe, that a mighty Stress is laid upon this Faith throughout the New Testament, as procuring good Acceptance of, and great Rewards for all those virtuous Actions, which flow from a Principle so agreeable to the Duty we owe to our blessed Saviour for his revealing such Truths, and enjoyning and most clearly explaining such Duties, as we owe to God, our Neighbours, and ourselves. This will fit us for Heaven and everlasting Happiness, by bringing every Thought in Obedience to the divine Majesty, whom we serve, and removing all Doubts concerning those mysterious Truths, which *Christ*, who cannot deceive us, hath so plainly revealed to us. Our Saviour's Divinity and that of the holy Ghost, are so expressly mentioned in Scripture, that it is Matter of Wonder, that there should be an *Arian* or *Socinian* in any Christian Nation. I have said so much in my two Letters, upon these two Articles of our Christian Faith, which every

Clergyman of the Church of *England* doth subscribe to and profess to believe; that it may be thought needless to add any thing more. But I cannot help adding to what I have said, what *St. Paul* has suggested to us in his tenth and twelfth Chapters of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. In the tenth Chapter he plainly ascribes to our Saviour what was done by *Jehovah* in the old Testament, and by Consequence he gives him the Title of the incommunicable Name of the supreme God *Jehovah*. Here where I give the Name of *Jehovah* to our Saviour, let me observe, that the Name sets out God's Eternity, for it implies all Times, past, present, and to come: The three Syllables in the Word *Jehovah* contain the Notes of all Times. The first *Je* signifies the Time to come; the second *Ho* the Time present; and the third *Vab* the Time past. Thus this Title given to *Christ*, our blessed Saviour, "*which is, and which was, and which is to come,*" is an express Interpretation of *Jehovah*. See *Rev.* i. 4, 8. ii. 17. and *16.* 5.

The Apostle expressly says, *1 Cor.* x. 9. *Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of Serpents.* Now whoever consults the Texts there referred to in the

the Margin, viz. *Exod.* 17. 2, 7. *Numb.* 21. 5, 8. *Psal.* 78. 56. and 95. 9. will find that *Jehovah* sent fiery Serpents among the People, and they bit the People, and much People of Israel died. So that as *St. Paul* represents it, the Argument may be framed thus. He that was tempted in the Wilderness is *Jehovah*, says *Moses*; But *Christ* is He, that was tempted in the Wilderness, says *St. Paul* here; Therefore *Christ* is *Jehovah*, and by Consequence true God. I think I have now, with what is hinted in my other Letters, said enough to prove our Saviour's Divinity. I shall only briefly add a Proof or two of the Personality and Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*. I own that by the Holy Spirit is sometimes meant some divine Gift or Grace; but then sometimes it signifies no less than a *Person*, who proceeds from, and is sent by the Father and the Son; as you may find in *St. John's Gospel*, Chapters 14. 15. Now it is most certain, that the Persons sending, must be distinct from the Person sent. He is also there called *Comforter*, which is a Proof of his Personality, for to comfort is a personal Action. And our Saviour tells his Disciples, that *when they are brought unto Magistrates and Powers, they should take no Thought, how or what they*

should answer; or what they should say: for the Holy Ghost should teach them in the same Hour what they ought to say. Luke 12. 11, 12. This is another plain Proof of both his Divinity and Personality. For most surely a Comforter, a Teacher, and a Remembrancer, as he is called, in the Places above mentioned, must be a Person. But I will add no more at present, than what St. Paul has said in the 12th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as I hinted before. There the Apostle speaking of the Manifestation of the Spirit, informs us; that to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit; to another the Gift of Healing by the same Spirit; to another Faith by the same Spirit: to another Working of Miracles; to another Prophecy; to another Discerning of Spirits; to another diverse Kinds of Tongues; to another Interpretation of Tongues. And seeing in the 6th Verse the Apostle declares, that it is the same God, which worketh all in all; and in Verse the 11th, that all worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as He will. It must therefore necessarily follow, that this one and self-same Spirit, who is here affirmed to be an equal Co-Worker with God, must
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be also the one and the self-same God, unless we will make two distinct Gods. I may here add what St. Paul says in the 2d Chapter of this Epistle: He applying to the Christian Dispensation, in the ninth Verse, that Passage of *Isaiab*, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man the Things, which God hath prepared for them, that love him*; in the next Verse asserts, *that God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*. And he gives us the Reason of this his Assertion; for the Spirit, says he, *searcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God*. And he farther intimates, that none but the Spirit was sufficient for this Purpose; and therefore all Knowledge of such Things must necessarily be derived from him alone; and herein lies the Force of what he says in the eleventh Verse, *What Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man, which is in him? Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God*. This in my Opinion proveth, that the Holy Spirit is God, infinite and omniscient; for no Creature, how excellent soever he be, being finite, can of itself search or know the deep Things of God. And from hence, I think, it plainly appears that the Holy Ghost partakes of the same divine

Essence,

Essence, Nature, or Substance with the Father and the Son, and that he is a distinct Person from them both; so that we are to believe and worship an Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, as is revealed in Scripture, though it is a Mystery and above our Comprehension. I will conclude in the Words of our most excellent and orthodox Church; saying, It is meet and right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Almighty, everlasting God. Who art one God, one Lord; not one only Person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the Glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any Difference or Inequality. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.

Ita ego credo, laudo & colo sanctam Trinitatem in Unitate divinæ Naturæ.

THOMAS TROUGHEAR Vesterensis,

SIR,

THE last time I had the Honour to wait upon you, we accidentally fell into a Discourse about the *Athanasian Creed*, as it is commonly called. The Doctrines of which, as professed in the Church of *England*, you declared, you believed, and expressed a great Concern, that it, and some of its Doctrines, particularly the Equality of the Son with the Father, as delivered in it, should be so much of late objected against. I spoke a great deal then in Defence of both the Creed in general, and that particular Doctrine contained in it; but I could not say so much, as the Importance of the Subject required: And therefore I have given you, Sir, the Trouble of this Letter, and herein represent to you, though very imperfectly, what may be said in Vindication of both, which, I hope, will contribute a little, both towards the Establishment of the Truth, and the Confirmation of your own Faith.

And,

And, Sir, in Respect of the Creed, though the great Learning and Judgment of Dr. *Waterland* will not permit me to assert, that it was, as we now have it, drawn up by *Athanasius* himself; yet give me leave to observe, that it is in its present Form very antient. *Gregory Nazianzen*, who died about twenty Years after *Athanasius*, mentions in his Oration in praise of *Athanasius*, Orat. 21. a Confession of Faith, which *Athanasius* presented to the Emperor, and calls it a *royal Gift*, *received with great Veneration, both in the East and West*. If this Creed is not that very Gift, it is allowed to be composed from it, or made agreeable to it. *Bishop Sparrow* says of it, that it *hath been received with great Veneration, as a Treasure of an inestimable Price, both by the Greek and Latin Churches*. I look upon it, Sir, as one of the best Guards we have of the Catholick Faith, as always professed in the Catholick Church: And therefore if I shewed any Warmth in my Defence of it, I hope, it is excusable, not only on account of the great Opinion I entertain of it my self, but also of the great Authority and Credit, it hath ever had among all the Orthodox Christians, since it was first published to the World: For you will allow me, Sir, to
 say,

say, that the Measures of our Zeal are, or ought to be, proportioned to the Worth and Excellence of the Objects of it, and are to be regulated by our Opinions or Judgments of their Importance. They are not my Sentiments only, but of some very good and learned Men; that they who strike at it, strike at the Establishment, not so much of the Church of *England*, as of the Church of *Christ* amongst us, and would have nothing of Christianity at all in the Nation, but every one left to do that which is right in his own Eyes only. I know what great Respect and Deference is due, and ought to be paid to all the Persons then present; but especially to you, Sir, who on account of your great natural and acquired Endowments, your good Sense and Learning, and particular Favours to me, have more than a double Title to all imaginable Respect from me; and if I was deficient in paying it, sure I am; I did not intend to be so. I must own, I am one of those Clergymen, who have subscribed to the Truths contained in it more than once, as all Graduates in the Universities, and all Clergymen upon their Institutions into their Benefices must do; and give me leave to add, as all dissenting Ministers must also do, notwithstanding they and their People

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ple talk so much about Creeds and Creed-makers, as I myself know some of them to do. And I verily think, that if I am really persuaded, I have subscribed to any Untruths, I ought to make a publick Recantation, and throw up my Living in Testimony of my Sincerity. I have learnt from *Job* 13. 7. that *we are not to speak wickedly for God, nor to talk deceitfully for him.* And therefore I cannot but highly blame such Ministers, of what Denomination soever they be, as do go or have gone from House to House, as I have been inform'd, and you, Sir, seem'd to acknowledge, some have done, and secretly propagate Notions contrary to this Creed, or labour to lessen its Authority and Influence, seeing they must have subscribed to it, as well as myself. Give me leave, good Sir, to assure you, that there is no Proposition in it, but what may be proved, either from express Words in Holy Scripture, or by necessary Inferences from them. It was drawn up, if not by *Atbanasius* himself, very early according to his and the *Antenicene* Fathers' Confession of Faith, in Opposition to the Opinions and vain Sophistry of such Hereticks, as denied some Articles of the Christian Faith, and yet would subscribe to the Creeds or Confessions then in Use, by

Equi-

Equivocations and Evasions taking them in a different Sense from what the Catholicks took them in.

And therefore, as I said before, this is the best Guard or Fence we have of the Christian Faith, as it was believed and professed in the primitive Church. And hence it is, that our modern *Arians* and *Socinians* so much decry this Creed, and labour to throw it out of our publick Confessions of Faith: because if this was once laid aside, they could subscribe to the other, and hold their Preferments with a great deal of Ease and Pleasure, and undermine Christianity and the Church, at the same Time they enjoy those Privileges and Advantages, which the State has been pleased to appoint for the Support of both amongst us. But where then is their Integrity!

This was, Sir, composed chiefly to hinder the ill Effects, and oppose the Evasions of the *Arian*, *Sabellian*, *Macedonian*, and *Apollinarian* Heresies: and therefore it chiefly regards the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour. It would take up too much Time, and I should trespass too much upon your Patience, if I should run through every Proposition in it, and shew what Heresy it was designed to obviate: At present I

shall confine myself to the Equality of the Son with the Father, which was the chief Subject of our late Discourse, being ready to give what satisfaction I can to you, Sir, or to any other Person in Respect of any other Doctrine contain'd in it.

But before I enter upon the direct Proof of the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead: In order to set before you in a clearer Light the Excellency of this Creed, I must begin at the third Verse of it, where it is declared, what the Catholick Faith is, viz. that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. This our Church does in many Places of our admirable Liturgy, in Conformity to primitive Antiquity. She does it in her Doxologies, Hymns, Creeds, in her smaller Litany, as well as in the Beginning and the End of her larger; in some of these we celebrate the Praises of, in others profess our Belief in, or invoke the Holy Trinity, besides what is said in the Conclusion of many of our Collects. Our smaller Litany, *Lord, have Mercy upon us*, &c. was antiently used both in the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, having been order'd by an old Council to be used every Day in the publick Service. But what I would chiefly here observe, is that the

Trisagium or Thrice-Holy, expressive of the Trinity in Unity, was taken by Christians of the first Ages of the Church into their Offices for the Holy Sacrament, and is of divine Original, being taken from *Isaiah* 6. 3. and *Revel.* 4. 8. for as the Thrice-Holy is expressive of a Trinity of Persons, so is *Lord God of Hosts* of the Unity of their Nature. So conformable is our excellent Church to the Practice of the Primitive! So well has she guarded the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and fenced it on every Side! And so weak or wicked are such of our Dissenters, as reject publick Forms of Prayer as such, seeing they were always in use, and are the best Preservatives of the Doctrines of the Church, and consequently of the Gospel!

The fourth and fifth Verses of this Creed are level'd against the *Sabellians* and *Arians*, neither confounding the three Persons in the Unity of one God, as the *Sabellians* confounded the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father, making the three Persons but one Person: Nor dividing the Substance, by making so many different Substances or Natures, as there are different Persons, as the *Arians* did. In Opposition to the former, we profess in the fifth Verse to believe, *that there is one Person*

of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost: and that this Distinction is not nominal only but real, will afterwards appear in the 21, 22, and 23 Verses. But then in opposition to the latter, *viz.* the *Arians*, we also profess to believe, as is expressed in the 6th Verse, that the Godhead or divine Substance of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is all one, both in Kind and Number, by an unspeakable Union; for the divine Nature cannot be multiply'd nor divided. And so the Glory of each Person is equal to the Glory of either of the other two, and the Majesty of all the Three is co-eternal, *i. e.* having no Beginning, and will have no End; for the Nature being one and the same undivided in all, the Glory and Majesty must be so too. And hence it is, that all the essential Attributes of the Divine Nature are common to all the Three Persons, as it follows in Verse the 7th, and it may very easily be proved from Scripture, that the Son and the Holy Ghost are equally with the Father Eternal, and equally infinite in Power, Dominion, Wisdom, and Knowledge, &c. Instances of these essential Attributes are given in the 8th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 15th, and 17th Verses, which belong to all the three distinct Persons: And yet their

Unity

Unity or Non-division is sufficiently guarded by the 11th, 12th, 14th, 16th, and 18th Verses, which is also evident from *Deut.* 6. 4. *Mark* 12. 29. *1 Corintb.* 8. 4. and many more Texts, which it would be as unnecessary, as tedious to mention here. And though we are taught in Scripture *to acknowledge every Person distinctly and by himself to be God and Lord: yet are we forbidden by the same Scripture to say, there be three Gods or three Lords,* Verses 19th, 20th. But still though this Unity of the Divine Nature is thus clear and manifest, and the three Persons have the same common essential Attributes; yet have they especial Properties, by which they are really distinguish'd from one another. One Person is not another, and they are not one Person but three Persons, being distinguish'd by their personal Properties, as expressed in the 21st, 22d, and 23d Verses. *The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten; the Son is not made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone from all Eternity, and not in Time as the Arians maintained; for the Father was always Father, and the Son always Son, and did not become either of them so, in any Time, with respect to each other, as in Matt.* 3. 17. *John* 1. 1, 2. 14, 18. and in many more Places:

Places: and therefore by this personal Property the Son is really and truly distinguished from the Father, who is of none. And the Holy Ghost is not of the Father alone, but from both Father and Son, and therefore is distinct from both; but how he proceeded from them, or how the Son is begotten of the Father, you see, Sir, is not here explained, but is a Mystery and inexplicable. The Creed goes no farther than the Scripture, and asserts only that these Things are so, without pretending to shew the Manner, how they are so; and it is owing to Mens' Ignorance or Willfulness, when it is accused of pretending to explain Mysteries or what is inexplicable. But now that the Holy Ghost doth proceed from both the Father and the Son, is evident, because he is the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and was sent by the one as well as by the other, *John* 14. 26. and 16. 7, 14. *Rom.* 8. 9. *Gal.* 4. 6. *Phil.* 1. 19. *1 Pet.* 1. 11. So that there is a Trinity of (or three) Persons in the Unity of the Godhead. And seeing there is a Difference of Order, a First, a Second and a Third Person, unbegotten or unoriginate, begotten and proceeding in the Holy Trinity; we may allow Subordination in this Respect, which makes that Text of

St. John

St. *John* 14. 28. plain, where he says, *My Father is greater than I*, if it should be supposed to be taken in Respect of his Divine and not his Human Nature only; for according to the Christian Oeconomy we allow a personal Dignity to the Father above the Son: but then, as it is expressed in the 24th Verse of this Creed, *none is afore or after* either of the *other* with Regard to Time or Duration, and *none is greater or less than another* in Point of essential Dignity or Perfection of Nature; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. And here is no Contradiction; for we do not take this Co-eternity or Co-equality, this Priority and Subordination in one and the same Respect: But the former is taken in an *absolute* Sense with Regard to their Nature, which is one and the same undivided in all the Three Persons, and therefore can have no Priority or Inferiority in it; and the latter is understood in Respect of their Order, that the Father has a *relative* Superiority or personal Dignity, in that he is the Fountain of Divinity, God of and from himself, and that the Son has his Essence and Divinity communicated to him by, or derived from the Father, and in this *relative* Sense is subordinate to him: for we say, that the Son

is of the Father, and therefore the Second Person, and the Holy Ghost of both, and therefore not the Second Person as the Son is, but the Third. So that it is concluded in Verse 25th, *that the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity* (or the Three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, or as the one God) *is to be worshipped* distinct without Division, and united without Confusion, as is evident from the Form in Baptism, and the Apostolical Benediction, 2 Cor. 13, 14. to mention nothing else. The Ancient Fathers, who urged the Words in the Form of Baptism against the *Arians*, have observ'd, that it is not said, *in the Names* in the Plural, but, *in the Name* in the Singular, as designing an Authority common to the Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Unity of Nature being thus included in the Unity of Name, which is that of God, since Baptism cannot be supposed to be administer'd in the Name of any but God alone.

What follows, Sir, is in Opposition to the *Eutychian* and *Apollinarian* Heresies, the former of which confounded the two Natures of *Christ*, making the Human to be wholly absorbed in the Divine, and not to remain distinct in his Person; and the latter took away the

the Human Soul, and put the Divine *Logos* in its Place. The former deny'd him to be both God and Man, and the latter to be full and complete Man. But he is perfect God, as is express'd in the 32d Verse, having the Divine Nature; and also perfect Man, having the Human Nature complete in both its Parts, *i. e. subsisting of a reasonable Soul, and human Flesh or Body*. Hence he is, as is said in the 33d Verse, by Consequence equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, or Divine Nature, and at the same Time inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood, or Human Nature. And yet he is not two Christs, but one Christ, Verse 34th. Not by Confusion of Natures, as the Eutychians held; but by an entire Union of two distinct Substances in one Person: just as the Soul and Body united, though distinct Substances and different in their Natures, do not make two Men, but one Man. But how this Union is made, is a Mystery still, and not here explained; just as the Union of the Soul and Body in Man is mysterious and Incomprehensible, and consequently inexplicable, though that there is such an Union none will deny. And therefore those that find fault with this Creed, as if it pretended to explain what is mysterious and

unreveal'd, are in a great mistake; for it does not explain the Manner, how the Union of the two Natures in *Christ* is made, which is a Mystery and unreveal'd; but only obviates the false Interpretations of Hereticks, and informs us in what Sense this and such other Objects of our Faith, as are reveal'd, as far as they are reveal'd, are to be taken. And the Illustration of this Hypostatick or personal Union, by the Union of the Soul and Body in Man, is vastly fine and perswasive; for I defy any Philosopher or Metaphysician of the highest Wit and deepest Penetration, to explain to us the Manner, how this Soul and Body are united together.

I have been forced, Sir, to place these Verses in this Light, that I might render, what I have farther to offer to your Consideration in Relation to the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead, as it is expressed in this Creed, more evident and convincing.

In Respect of this Equality you may remember, Sir, I said in our Discourse, that all those Texts which proved *Christ* to be really and truly God, such as *John* 1. 1, 2, 3. and *Col.* 1. 16. imply'd that Equality; because the Godhead being infinite, can admit of no Degrees.

Degrees. They must, though different Persons, be one God, or *Christ* must not be God at all. I think all Philosophers agree, that Infinity, which is implied in the Notion or Idea of God, admits of no *Magis* or *Minus*, is not more or less so. But not to insist upon metaphysical Arguments; I will confine myself to what is said in Scripture and the ancient Fathers, in Proof of this weighty Point. In the former, *Christ* is represented as the Father's only begotten Son, in such a Sense as no Creature is or can be, which destroys both the *Arian* and *Socinian* Hypotheses, if duly attended to. For if he were a Creature, though never so excellent, the Title of *Only Begotten* could not belong to him. He would then be made or created, as other Creatures are, though superior to them, and differ from Angels in Excellency of Nature only, as they do from us; and be a Son in the same Sense they and we are Sons; because on this Supposition he would be a created Being as they and we are. The Word Creature would be still predicated of, or common to us all. The Title of *Only Begotten Son* must imply, that none else are Sons as he is, and consequently must infer a Communication of his Nature from the Father; but how that Communica-

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tion is made, this Creed does not say; it is still, as I said before, a Mystery, and not to be comprehended or explain'd by us.

Give me leave, Sir, to observe here, that *John* 1. 3. does of itself wholly overturn the *Arian* Hypothesis; for if *Christ* the *Word* made all Things, and without him was not any Thing made that was made, then he could not be made or be a Creature himself, unless he made himself; but this would imply a Contradiction, and suppose him to be and not to be at the same Time. And again, this very Text compared with *Col.* 1. 16. evidently overthrows the *Socinian* Scheme, and proves our Saviour to have had a Being, or to have existed before he was born of the *Virgin Mary*, and that the Creation of the *material* World is to be ascrib'd to him, as well as the new Creation or Renovation of the *moral* World. For in *Coloss.* 1. 16. it is expressly said, that all Things in Heaven, Principalities and Powers were created by him. Now the Angels, which kept their first State, did not want a new Creation or Renovation in a moral sense at our Saviour's coming, or at the Beginning of the Gospel-Dispensation, and the Devils had it not granted to them; for, if we will believe *St. Jude*, they are reserved in everlasting Chains

Chains under Darknes, unto the Judgment of the great Day. Jude 6. God hath so loved Mankind, that he hath given them a Mediator and Redeemer, but the Devils have had none. And this puts me in Mind of another Text in Hebr. 2. 16. He (Christ) verily took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham: the former Part of the Verse is an invincible Proof of Christs essential Divinity, as the latter is of his real Humanity; and the whole is an undeniable Argument against what both the Arians and Socinians maintain. He took not on him the Nature of Angels, or he took not hold of Angels to redeem them; and yet can it be thought, that if according to Arius, he was one of the supremest Order of Angels, he would not have laid hold of them, to save them from sinking in everlasting Destruction, if he could? or if, according to Socinus, he was but a mere Man, can we imagine, how he could have assumed the Angelick Nature to redeem it, if he would? And yet the Text supposes, that he could have assumed either the one or the other, which he pleased; and also implies, that he must of Necessity have been of a different Nature from either of those two Natures, which he had in his Power and Choice

Choice to have assumed : and what other Nature besides the Divine can be ascribed to him, I leave to them to find out.

I must farther observe, Sir, that the *Jews* supposed, the Son of God was God and equal to the Father, and therefore sought to slay *Jesus*, because he said, he was the former, which imply'd the latter. *John* 5. 18. I have, Sir, more than once mention'd this Chapter to you, as what of itself sufficiently proves this Equality of the Son with the Father, and justifies the *Athanasian* Creed, if there were no other Proofs in Scripture for it : Let it then be consider'd a little. The *Jews* supposed the Son of God was God, and therefore equal to the Father ; and they sought to slay *Jesus*, because he had asserted the one expressly of himself, Ver. 15th, (See also *John* 10. 33.) and the other by Implication upon their Principles. You will allow, Sir, that our Saviour is represented, as a Man of Honour and Integrity quite through the New Testament. Now as an honest Man should have done, he is so far from undeceiving the *Jews*, if they argued falsely upon their Supposition, viz. that if he was the Son of God, he must be God and equal to the Father ; that he confirms their Opinion, and proves their Inference, by asserting

ing an Equality of Operation with the Father, Verses 20, 21. which follows an Equality of Nature; for *Modus Operandi*, as the Philosophers tell us, *sequitur Modum Essendi*: i. e. the Manner or Measure of Acting follows the Manner or Measure of Essence: i. e. if he were not equal to God in Nature, and consequently in Power, he could not do what God did. And then he asserts, that divine Worship or Honour is to be paid to the Son as well as to the Father; which is not to be done *Deut.* 6. 13. 5. 20. and *1 Sam.* 7. 3. *Matth.* 4. 14. and *Luke* 4. 8. unless he were really and truly God, the Lord God of *Israel*. After this he makes use of four Arguments to prove himself God, and consequently as they supposed, equal to the Father. The first is at Verse the 28th, where he asserts in express Terms, that by his Voice he should raise and judge all Mankind, which implies infinite Power and Knowledge; for none can raise all, but he that has all Power; and none can judge all, but he that knows all. This Hint to you, Sir, is sufficient; if I leave any Thing here, not made clear enough, upon the least Intimation I will endeavour to explain it more fully.

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The next Argument is the Testimony of *John* the Baptist, whose Testimony they acknowledged to be true, because they esteem'd him a Prophet, Verses 32, 33. Now *John* had declared, that he heard him called the Son of God by a Voice from Heaven, *Matt.* 3. 16, 17. *Luke* 3. 22. and *John* 1. 32, 33, 34. And hence he called him *the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World.* *John* 1. 29. See also *John* 3. 31, &c. And *John* Baptist was counted a Prophet, *Matt.* 14. 5. 21. 26. *Luke* 20. 6. and the Testimony of a Prophet upon their own Principles was true.

The third Argument is taken from the Testimony of the Father by the Miracles he did, Verse 36. in Confirmation of the Truth of his Saying, that he was the Son of God. He pursues this Argument more fully in the 8th Chapter, where he assumes to himself, (saying, *Before Abraham was, I am*) the incommunicable Title of the supreme God, *John* 8. 58. and in Verse the 37th, and 38th of the 10th Chapter he asserts, that he was in the Father, and the Father in him, *i. e.* having one and the same Nature or Essence, or as is declared Verse the 30th, *he and his Father are one, i. e.* one God or Being, one in

in Nature or Substance: for to say that they are one in Respect of an Unity of Sentiments or Will only, as the *Socinians* and *Arians* would make us believe, is as absurd and ridiculous, as if I should say, that the Father and an Angel or a glorified Saint are one Being in an absolute Sense, because they have no other Will than that of God the Father. In short, Sir, to reduce the Unity of the Son with the Father to a bare Unity of Opinions, such as that of the Disciples with each other was, and thus to take away from *Jesus Christ* that most adorable Unity, by which he is co-essential with the Father, they must deprive him of the Title of God, of the true God, of the great God, which the Scriptures ascribe to him; they must deprive him of the august Dignity of Creator, and of being God over all blessed for ever, which the same Scriptures every where attribute to him. If it could indeed be proved, that he is no more than merely the Minister of the eternal Father; then truly it might be supposed, that the Unity he has with the Father is no more than that, which the Disciples had with one another, an Unity of Sentiments, or Consent of Will and Affections; and not an Unity of Essence, or Identity of Nature: but when will it be pos-

fible to take away from him all the sublime Characters of Divinity? Not whilst we have the Benefit of the Holy Scriptures, and the Use of Sense and Reason. *Vigilius* Bishop of *Tapsum*, writing against the *Sabellians*, who confounded the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father, has with a very delicate Turn of Thought and acute Judgment opposed them and the *Arians*, who divided the Nature of the Father and the Son, to each other, and confuted both their two opposite Heresies by one and the same Sentence: *Jesus Christ* has said, says he, *I and my Father are one*: in saying, *I and my Father*, he has divided what *Sabellius* wrongfully confounds; and in adding *are one*, he has united what *Arius* separates. I might pursue this Point a great deal farther, if the Compass of this Letter would permit; but I am afraid, I shall trespass too much, Sir, upon your Patience, by what I have already said, and am yet to offer to you upon this Subject. But I beg leave to proceed to the fourth Argument, which our Saviour uses in the 5th Chapter of St. *John*; it is taken from the Testimony of the Scriptures, Ver. 39. and particularly from what *Moses* had wrote of him, Verse 46. See *Gen.* 3. 15. and 49. 10. *Deut.* 18. 15, 18. I might mention a great many

many more Texts from the *Psalms*, *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah* and other Prophets; but 'tis needless to do it to you, Sir, who have been conversant in the Scriptures, or as St. *Paul* said of *Timothy*, have known them from a Child.

The next Argument I shall make use of, Sir, to prove the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead, is taken from *Phil. 2. 6, 7*. The Apostle there teaches us a Lesson of Humility from the Example of *Christ*, who being in the Form of God, i. e. being God, thought it no Act of Presumption or Robbery to take upon him the Style and Title of being equal to God; yet did not take upon him as God's Equal, made no Ostentation of his Deity upon Earth; but willingly abased and humbled himself, taking upon him the Form of a Servant, or becoming Man. Where it is evident, that our Saviour subsisted, or was in the Form of God, before he took upon him the Form of a Servant, or became Man. By this is the wonderful Condescension of our Lord exhibited to us, in that he descended from the highest State to the lowest, and became real Man for us, who are in the lowest Rank of Intelligent Beings. As therefore the taking upon himself the Form of a Servant, does denote his being real Man; so

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by *his being in the Form of God* must be meant his being real God: this is the plain and natural Construction of the Words. *Form* must be taken in one and the same Sense in both Expressions: *i. e.* as *Form* in the latter does signify the Reality of his Human Nature; so in the former it must signify the Reality of his Divine. And this strongly concludes against the *Arians*, that the Nature, wherein the Son of God subsisted before his Incarnation, was not created: for as soon as he took a created Nature, he was *in the Form of a Servant*, which he never was in before he became Man, by this Text. But according to the *Arians*, who make a Creature of the Son of God, existing before he became Man, he must have been *in the Form of a Servant* even before his Incarnation; for every Creature, as such, how excellent soever, is with Respect to God, its Creator, in the Condition of a Servant, and owes him Service and Obedience. From hence I conclude, that the Son of God according to that excellent Nature, in which he subsisted before his Incarnation, was equal to the Father, as the Apostle here asserts. For the Argument lies thus, *Christ, being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery, or no taking what did not belong to him, to be equal with God:*

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Now if he thought it no *Robbery*, no assuming a Title he had no Right to, by Consequence it was no *Robbery*; and if it was no *Robbery*, no pretending to be what he was not, he must be *Equal*; and if *Equal*, he must be God by Nature, as the Father is. *Clemens Romanus*, who was St. *Paul's* own Companion, and made Bishop of *Rome* by him, and *Hermas* and *Justin Martyr* all give the same Interpretation of this Text that I do; whose Words I will send you, if you desire them. But *Justin Martyr* has so very much about the Godhead and the Equality of the Son with the Father, that it would be endless as well as needless to quote all his Passages. *Tertullian*, who flourish'd in the Middle of the second Century, 130 Years before the Council of *Nice*, wrote a Discourse against *Praxeas* the *Sabellian*, from the whole Tenor of which it is apparent, that *Praxeas'* Heresy in asserting the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be but one Person, was founded upon these two Suppositions. First, that the Catholicks maintain'd, that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost were of one and the same Substance, and consequently equal as to their Divine Nature, which was true. And secondly, that there could not possibly be, as the Catholicks maintain'd, three distinct Per-

Persons subsisting in one and the same Nature, which was false. Against this last false Supposition of *Praxeas*, *Tertullian* has these remarkable Assertions, *that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are of one Substance, and one State, and one Power*, and that they are not *Unus*, one Person, but *Unum*, one Being, plainly alluding to 1 *John* 5. 7.

What we call, Sir, the *Nicene Creed*, is nothing else, but the entire antient Creed of the oriental Churches with some few Explications, to obviate the perverse Interpretations and subtle Evasions of *Arius* and *Macedonius*, made by the Fathers of the Council of *Nice* against the former, who denied the real and true Divinity of the Son, and the Council of *Constantinople* against the latter, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The Sum of what they added by Way of Explication to the Rule of Faith with Regard to the Son is this, that he is no Creature, *not made, but very God of very God*, subsisting in the very Substance or Nature of his Father, and consequently equally partaking of the essential Attributes belonging to the Divine Nature with the Father. *Arius* would allow our Saviour to be God, but not God by Nature, a made or created God, an inferior One; created indeed

deed before the World began, but not God from Eternity. So that what is there added by way of Explication to the old Apostles' Creed, which *Arius* would subscribe to, is, as I said before, to obviate his Evasions, and to shew in what Sense the Apostles and primitive *Ante-Nicene* Fathers took the Word *Son* in the Form of Baptism, and this Expression in the Holy Scriptures, *viz. Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God.*

I might, Sir, prove this Equality from many more Texts, as that he is called by St. Paul, *God over all, blessed for ever. Rom. 9. 5.* and by St. John, *the true God, and eternal Life. 1 John 5. 20.* But the 7th Verse of this last Chapter, *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Logos or Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, i. e. one God or Being;* this Verse, I say, is abundantly sufficient for this Purpose. A Verse, which is now, after what Dr. *Mills* in his *New Testament*, and *David Martin*, Rector of the *French Church at Utrecht*, in his *Dissertations* upon it have said, allowed by all learned Men to be genuine. I think it incontestably appears to be so, because it was read in Churches in the old *Italick Bible*, and made use of by the *Catholick Bishops* against

the *Arians* in their Confession of Faith delivered to King *Hunerick*; which never would have been done, if it had been a disputable Text. It is quoted not only by *Tertulian*, *St. Cyprian*, *Eugenius*, *Fulgentius*, *Victor*, *Facundus* and *Vigilius* of *Tapsum*, all *Africans*; but also was in the most antient and correct Copies of the *Roman Church*. It is quoted by *St. Eucherius* of *Lyons*; we meet with it also in the *Complexiones* of *Cassiodorius Senator*, where he reads, & *hi tres unus est Deus*, instead of *unum*, either by way of Explication, or trusting to his Memory without consulting the Original. However this proves, that there was such a Text, which is all I alledge it for. *Mr. Twells*, Rector of *St. Matthew's, Friday-street*, has defended the Genuineness of this Text with great Learning and Accuracy. I think (for I have it not by me) it is in his Examination of the *Anglo-greek New Testament*, Part II. What more Proofs need we require to pronounce it genuine? *Vigilius* of *Tapsum* urges it strongly against the *Arians*; and not only mentions the three Witnesses in Heaven, but ascribes to every one of them his distinct Name, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and from the End of the Verse concludes their Unity in the Godhead. The

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Number *three* thus reduced to *one* is the total Overthrow of the *Arian* and *Socinian* Heresies; and therefore 'tis no Wonder, that these *Anti-trinitarians* use their utmost Endeavours to throw this Text out of the New Testament and rob us of it: for by these extraordinary Words, *these three are one*, the Unity of Nature in the three Persons presents itself without any Difficulty to the Understanding and Faith of every Christian.

I might here add, that our Saviour was the Lord *Jehovah*, who appeared to *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, and to *Moses* and the Prophets in the Old Testament; and that the Holy Lord of Hosts, whose Glory *Isaiab* saw, Chap. 6. 3. is *Christ*, as we are assured by St. *John* in his Gospel, Chap. 12. 40, 41. I might also here add, how a Hymn call'd *ὕμνος ἰσθῶς*, or *Glory to God on high* was sung to *Christ*, as God, and was in use long before the *Nicene* Council, and is mentioned or alluded to by *Pliny* the younger in his famous Epistle to the Emperor *Trajan*. I might also mention St. *Stephen's* and St. *John's* Prayers to our Saviour, which infer his Godhead. I might prove this Point farther from the Sufficiency of his Sacrifice; for though he suffer'd only in his Human Nature, yet the shedding of his

Blood could not have been a sufficient Attonement for the Sins of Mankind, unless it had receiv'd an infinite Value from the Union of the Divine Nature to the Human in his Person. And hence the Church of God is said to be purchased with his own Blood, *Acts* 20, 28. because it was purchased with the Blood of that Person, who is God as well as Man. But if any Person, after what I have said, does still doubt of the Equality of the Son with the Father; let him seriously consider the *Form* in Baptism, *Matt.* 28. 19. whereby we are admitted into the Religion of, and profess to worship Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Is it consistent with common Sense to suppose, that *Christ*, who came to put an End to the Idolatry and Superstition of the Heathen World, and to establish the Worship of the one true God every where, should order us to be baptiz'd into the Name, *i. e.* into the Belief and Worship of the one true God, and two Creatures of an inferior Nature; as the Son and the Holy Ghost must be, if they are not the one God, or equally Partakers of the Divine Nature with the Father?

But I am afraid, Sir, I have carried my Reflections too far and am grown tedious. If every thing I have said, be duly considered,
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it will take off that Noise and Clamour, which the Enemies of the Christian Faith usually make against the *Damnatory* Sentences, as they are commonly called, in the Beginning and End of the *Athanasian* Creed. For he that obstinately persists in the Denial of the Holy Trinity, and the necessary Doctrines of the Incarnation, &c. in Effect denies the whole Oeconomy of the Gospel; and therefore without Repentance and revoking his wicked Errors can expect no Salvation by it. If this, Sir, gives you any Pleasure and Satisfaction in reading it, and contributes any Thing to the Confirmation of your Faith, I have my End in writing it; and need, I hope, make no other Apology for sending it to you, than that I hereby take an Opportunity of shewing my own Zeal for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, and moreover of thanking you for all Favours, and assuring you that I am with the greatest Deference,

SIR,

Your most obliged,

And most obedient Servant, &c.

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EVER since I was admitted into the Priesthood, I determin'd with myself, by God's Grace, as at my Ordination in a most solemn Manner I had promised to do, that I would teach nothing, as required of Necessity to Eternal Salvation, but what may be concluded from, and proved by the Holy Scriptures, which contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of Necessity for Eternal Salvation through Faith in *Jesus Christ*. I likewise, as I then promised, resolved with myself to be ready at all Times, according to the best of my Capacity, with all Diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous strange Doctrine contrary to God's Word, to maintain the Truth, instruct the ignorant, and confirm the wavering or doubtful: And here I will borrow an Expression from a late *Weekly Miscellany*, Number CCCLIX. and humbly hope with the worthy Author of it, that that
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omnipotent Saviour, who died for me, will give me Resolution to persevere in his Service, and an ample Reward for my best, though weak Endeavours, to promote his Religion. In some measure to fulfil my Engagements, and to shew the Sincerity of my Resolution, when I found the principal and distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, which regard the Divinity of our Saviour and the Holy Trinity, ridiculed and burlesqued in this Neighbourhood by some, and look'd upon by not a few, either as Points of Speculation only, or as Matters of no Moment, whether we believe them or not, I drew up a Letter in Vindication of the *Atbanasian Creed*, and our Saviour's Equality with the Father as touching his Godhead; which Letter being shew'd to some Friends, I was prevail'd upon to let it be sent to the Author of the *Weekly Miscellany*, wherein it was publish'd some time ago.

I shall ever esteem these the principal and distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, and the Belief of them absolutely necessary to Salvation in this Country, where the Light of the Gospel shines with so great a Lustre, and no Man needs want sufficient and proper Means of Instruction, if he will but attend to, or apply for them. These Doctrines I endeavour'd

to prove by Texts of Scripture, set in a plain, easy and natural Light, without any forced Construction : I set them in such a Light as, I thought, would convince every unprejudiced and considerate Reader ; but to my great Surprise a certain Gentleman, who lives in my Neighbourhood, did lately declare in public Company and before my Face, that he was so far from being convinc'd by it, that on the contrary he was by my Letter made more doubtful of those Doctrines, than he was before. Surely this must be owing to want of Attention and due Consideration, and not to want of Capacity, to any Prejudice, or corrupt Mind in him. I cannot in Charity attribute it to the latter, and therefore must ascribe it to the former. I never heard that he was given to Scepticism or Infidelity, or that his Mind was poison'd by reading the *Independent Whig*, and such like Books ; which are here industriously spread about to weaken Men's Faith and corrupt their Manners. I must therefore, Sir, desire you to lend him my Letter again, and let him read it over more attentively. His chief Objection was to that Part of it, wherein I say, that the Father is prior to, or before the Son in Order. He does not observe, that I there say, it is so, not in respect of their essential

essential Attributes, but in their relative Capacity. My Words are, "*None is greater or less than another in Point of essential Dignity or Perfection; but the whole three (that is in this Respect) are co-eternal and co-equal.*" And here is no Contradiction; for we do not take this Co-eternity and Co-equality, this Priority and Inferiority or Subordination in one and the same Respect; but the former is taken in an absolute Sense with Regard to their Nature, which is one and the same, undivided in all the three Persons, and therefore can have no Priority or Inferiority in it; and the latter is understood in Respect of their Order, that the Father has a relative Superiority or personal Dignity, in that he is the Fountain of Divinity, God of and from himself; and that the Son has his Essence and Divinity communicated to him by, or derived from the Father, and in this relative Sense is inferior to him, &c." This is all agreeable to primitive Antiquity, and modern Orthodoxy; to what the ancient Fathers asserted, and all our modern sound Divines have said upon this Subject: And if I had not been right, such is Mr. *Hooker's* Impartiality and unbiass'd Zeal for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, that he would not

have publish'd my Letter at all, or I should have had his Remarks upon it in his *Miscellany* before this Day. His very Publication of my Letter is a Vindication of it, or at least an Argument, that it contains nothing in it, but what is consonant to the Analogy of Faith. Desire him, Sir, to consult Dr. *Hammond* upon the Text, *John* 14. 28. before he finds fault with me, and he will find that the Doctor says, *he that sent me is as such (i. e. in that relative Sense) greater than I who am sent by him*; or Mr. *Burkitt*, who has explain'd this Text more fully. First, he observes, as I also did, that it must be understood with Reference to *Christ's* Human Nature, as Mediator; for so he was the Father's Servant, and the Father as God was greater than he as Man. Again, says he, the Father may be said to be greater than *Christ* in regard of his Paternity, as being the Fountain of the Deity; the Father is of himself, but the Son is begotten of the Father; but being of the same Substance with the Father, he is consequently God, as the Father is God: For the Inequality arises not from the Essence, but from the Order and Manner of Subsistence. Thus the Father was greater than he: greater than he, as to his Original, the Son being begotten by him; and
greater

greater is he that gives, than he that receives; but as to his Essence they are both one God, and so equal. Three Ways, says he, the Father was greater than *Christ*. First, with Respect to his Human Nature. Who can doubt, but a dependant Creature is inferior to that Almighty Being that made him? Secondly, with Respect to the eternal Generation of his Divine Person, as he was begotten of the Father, who is therefore called the Fountain of the Deity. Thirdly, with Respect to his Office, as Mediator, for thus he was the Father's Servant. O wonderful Condescension! That the eternal Word, who as such, was equal with the Father, should in Compassion to us accept a Station, and sustain a Character, in which the Father was greater than he. Now, says he, though under each of these Considerations, God the Father is greater than the Son; yet none of them are inconsistent with the Son's being God by Nature. I might add what some of our most learned Bishops, *Pearson*, *Bull* and *Stillingsfleet*; or some eminent Divines, *Dr. Grabe*, *Dr. Hicks*, and many more have said; but this is enough to shew that I have advanced no new Notion: and indeed, if I had, I might have expected a much more learned Person than Mr. ----- to have

chastis'd me. Some Persons seem, I am sorry to say it, to be very indifferent about the most weighty Points of Religion, or entertain wrong Notions in Respect of Things that concern their eternal Salvation; and will neither take any Pains themselves to be better inform'd, nor admit of Instructions from other Persons. How easily might Mr. ----- have consulted Dr. *Hammond* and Mr. *Burkitt* upon the New Testament, and been better satisfy'd about the Meaning of that Text, before he condemn'd in so public a Place the Account I gave of it. Pray, Sir, seeing you are his Neighbour, and are often in his Company, importune him to read with a little more Care and Attention all I have said about this Text, and then put this plain Question to him; if he have a Son, will he not allow him to have all essential Properties belonging to Mankind, and to be as much, though not so great a Man, as himself; and yet in his relative Capacity to be inferior or subordinate to him, as his Father? I do not mention this as a parallel Case, but only by way of Illustration. There is some Analogy or Resemblance, though not an exact Agreement between them, as will be shewn by and by.

Again

Again there are some Persons, as you yourself, Sir, told me, who will not believe the Trinity, because they cannot comprehend it; and ask with *Nicodemus* in another Case, how can these Things be? Pray, Sir, ask these Gentlemen, if you chance to meet with them again, who desire them to believe, how this is or can be, *i. e.* how there is or can be a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead; or how the three Persons are so inseparably united as to be one God? All that we desire of them is, to believe according to what is reveal'd, and leave secret Things to God, or to a future State; when we shall have a farther Knowledge of divine Things, and know as we are known. All that we desire of them is to believe that it is so, without troubling themselves about the Manner how it is so. That there are three Persons, and yet but one God, is plainly reveal'd; this we are to believe, because it is reveal'd; these three Persons we are to worship in the Unity of the Godhead, because we are baptiz'd in the Name, or into the Belief and Profession of them. And upon the Sincerity of this Belief or Profession depends the Salvation of all such as have had proper and sufficient Opportunities and Means of Instruction. But pray, Sir, don't these Gentlemen

tlemen of so comprehensive and exalted a Genius, believe many Things to be, without comprehending the Manner, how they are? Do not they believe that God is eternal, *i. e.* without Beginning and without End? And yet is it possible that the Understanding of Man, being finite and limited, should form a clear and comprehensive Notion of Eternity, *i. e.* of a Thing unlimited and infinite? I mention'd in my Letter, by way of Illustration and that I might not be misunderstood, the Union of the Soul and Body, which no Man of common Sense and Reason will deny to be, though the wisest cannot tell or explain how it is. Does not the Mind of Man think and reflect, add, subtract, multiply and divide? Does it not reason and deduce one Thing from another? Does it not determine itself, and act freely, and move the Body, and stop its Motion as it pleases? Can any one certainly tell how all this is done? How the one commands so powerfully, and the other obeys so readily? Are there not many Things above one's Reason, and which the Mind cannot comprehend, nor form a distinct and clear Idea of, and yet cannot be asserted to be contrary to our Reason? They may indeed be above our Comprehension; but do they contradict

tradict any of those plain and self-evident Principles, which are implanted in our Understanding? Who, for Example, is able to apprehend, how the smallest Particle of Matter, which can be assign'd, is in itself capable of being for ever divided? And yet this is so far from being contrary to my Reason, that it informs me the Thing must be so, though I am not able to comprehend the Manner of it. And no Philosopher, that I know of, hath ever pretended to deny this; there being no Part of Matter, because Matter implies Extension, though ever so small, that can be so much as conceived to be absolutely and in itself indivisible. We are well assured that a Man born blind may be convinced and induced to believe, that there is such a Thing as Light, because his Neighbours tell him so, although he knows not what it is: And dare any one disbelieve God, when he tells him, that there are three Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature, or that the Divine and Human Nature are united together in the single Person of *Christ*, because he does not understand or comprehend, how they are so? I might instance in many more strange and wonderful Things in Nature, as also in Mathematicks, in Physicks, in Astronomy, in Navi-

Navigation and other Arts and Sciences, which those, who are ignorant of them, will scarce believe, and which to those, who know them, are incomprehensible. Can they explain to us exactly the Configuration of Plants, or the Formation of Insects? Can they give us a perfect Account of that amazing Variety of Objects which one Blade of Grass presents to our View; or how the Roots of Trees fetch up, as it were by subterraneous Pipes, all the Juices that are necessary to feed them? Can they tell us, how Grains of Corn multiply in the Ground, and as they corrupt, germinate and spring; or how the teeming Earth, like a kind Parent, restores with Usury more Ears than she had received Grains? It would be endless as well as needless to multiply Questions of this Nature. The Flux and Reflux of the Sea continue still a Mystery, notwithstanding the many Hypotheses that the most ingenious Philosophers have form'd to solve them by. How contradictory to common Sense and Reason does it seem to be, that two Lines should be so drawn, as still to come nearer to one another and yet never meet, though drawn in *Infinitum*? And yet this is demonstrably true in Mathematicks. May it not seem to some an incomprehensible Mystery,

ry.

ry, that Water should be turned into Ice, and a River congealed into a solid Rock? Or who would not think it impossible, that transparent Glass should be made out of Sand, which is a dark or opaque Body; and yet this may be seen done any Day in several Parts of the Kingdom? What need I mention infinite Divisions of Numbers in Decimal Fractions, when 'tis acknowledged, that there is no Number actually infinite; or the Mysteries of the Loadstone and the Needle, which no Man can any more give a satisfactory and certain Account of, than he can find out the Philosopher's Stone? There are none of our Sceptical Gentlemen in Religion, but who believe, that either the Earth or the Sun moves; and yet I desire any of them, who disbelieve a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, because they cannot comprehend how the three Persons should be so united as to be but one God, to let me know what Comprehension they have of the Motion of the Earth; how it can be supposed to move fifteen Miles in a Minute, a Quarter of a Mile or two Furlongs in a Second, and above seven Yards in a Third; and yet they seem all the while to stand still, and are insensible of it, and acknowledge no Motion can be in an Instant.

H

I leave

I leave it to themselves to calculate, as well as they can, the prodigious long Race of the Sun through the spacious Firmament, if it be supposed to move; and if they want any Assistance or Direction, I recommend to them the Perusal of the Chapter of the Libertines in Monsieur *De la Bruyere's* Characters of the Manners of the Age. Seeing then, Sir, many Things are admitted in Nature and Art, attended with some Difficulties that the Reason of Man cannot surmount, or wherein are some Knots too hard for our understanding to untie: Why may not Religion claim the same Privilege that Philosophy does; and the Book of God claim the same Allowances that are made to the Book of Nature? The next Time, Sir, you are in those Gentlemen's Company, who, you told me, made such Objections to my Letter, advise them to submit their Reason to Faith, and believe what is reveal'd concerning the Trinity, without enquiring into the Manner how it is. *The secret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but those Things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law. Deut. 29. 29.* I cannot do better than conclude this Letter not only for my own Justification, but for the

Satis-

Satisfaction or Instruction of all sober Men, with the Words of Archbishop *Synge* in a small Tract called, *A plain and easy Method, &c.* which I would beg leave to recommend to the serious Consideration of all Persons, who have been baptized into the Christian Faith.

Seet. 35. " All, who profess Christianity
 " agree in this, that there is but one God a-
 " lone; but the Controversy concerning a Tri-
 " nity in the Unity of the Divine Nature has
 " been no small Disturbance to the Church.
 " The Doctrine I take to be very evidently
 " grounded upon the Holy Scripture, the Au-
 " thority of which is on both Sides allowed;
 " for the Father, the Word or Son, and the
 " Holy Ghost are there very often spoken of
 " exactly in the same Manner, as we always
 " speak of three several Persons; and of each
 " of these Persons such Things are frequently
 " said, as cannot agree to any but God. Where-
 " as all the Objections, that are made against
 " it, are grounded upon this palpable Mis-
 " take; that the Objectors always understand
 " the Words, Person, Nature, Substance, and
 " all the other Terms made use of in this
 " Dispute in the same Signification, as we use
 " those Words when we speak of Men like

" our selves : For Example, three human Per-
 " sons, say they, are three distinct Men,
 " therefore, if they were really three Divine
 " Persons, they must be three distinct Gods.
 " Again, it is absurd, say they, to imagine,
 " that God, who is omnipresent and supreme,
 " and infinite in Power, can be sent by any
 " one ; but the Father is said to have sent the
 " Son, and the Father and the Son are said to
 " have sent the Holy Ghost ; from whence
 " they would infer, that therefore neither the
 " Son nor the Holy Ghost is God, with much
 " more to the like Purport, that frequently
 " occurs in the Writings of the *Unitarians*.
 " But ---- have we not the very same Argu-
 " ments against God's Wisdom and his Love
 " to Mankind, as the *Unitarians* bring against
 " the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the
 " Godhead ? And may we not after the same
 " Manner argue against every Attribute and
 " Action of God ? which for Want of more
 " proper Words we are forced to express in
 " the very same Terms, that we make use of
 " in speaking of whatever corresponds there-
 " unto in Man. Here then a sober *Unitarian*,
 " as well as every other Man, must, I think,
 " have Recourse to the Principle just now laid
 " down, *Sec. 134.* (*viz.* the same Difference
 " that

"that there is between the Root, Spring or
 "Principle, from whence any Property, Habit,
 "Attribute or Action proceeds, the same there
 "must be between the Properties, Habits,
 "Attributes or Actions themselves; however,
 "for Want of sufficient Variety of Words we
 "are often forced to call them by the same
 "Name) and say, that as the eternal and per-
 "fect Nature of God is altogether of a diffe-
 "rent Kind from the created and imperfect
 "Nature of Man; so is there fully the same
 "Difference between the Properties, Attri-
 "butes and Actions, that exist in, or proceed
 "from these two several Natures. ~~And~~ Al-
 "though therefore, God is not wise with
 "that Kind or Sort of Wisdom that Man
 "is, nor loves with that Kind or Sort of
 "Love, that Man does; yet we truly and
 "properly say, that God is wise, and that
 "he loves: and we demonstratively prove
 "these Truths from ~~the outward~~ Effects of
 "both, although our weak Understanding
 "cannot frame a Notion, what the Divine
 "Wisdom and Love internally, and in them-
 "selves are, when at the same Time we are
 "sensible that we enjoy the Benefit and Com-
 "fort of them both. This I take to be a ra-
 "tion- ~~the Word or Sense and the Holy~~ "tional
 "Proof."

tional and satisfactory Answer, and such as
 is to be made use of, whenever any Argu-
 ments are drawn from the bare Signification
 of any Words that are in common applied,
 both to God and Man, or any other Crea-
 ture. Let us then see, whether this very
 Answer will not in the same Manner clear
 up all the Difficulties that arise from such
 Sort of Objections as are usually made a-
 gainst the Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons
 in the Unity of the Godhead. For when
 we say, that there are three Persons in the
 Unity of the Divine Nature, we do not
 mean such Kind of Persons as three Men
 are, any more than by Wisdom, Love, or
 any of the Attributes or Actions of God, we
 mean the same Sort of Qualifications or Ac-
 tions, as we do when we apply the same
 Words to Man. But our Meaning (as well
 as in so sublime a Doctrine I am able to
 express it) is, that in the Divine Nature,
 which is but one, (and that numerically as
 the Schools speak) there is a threefold Dis-
 tinction internally, and, as it is in itself, al-
 together incomprehensible to us; but out-
 wardly in the Holy Scriptures represented
 to us under the personal Names of the Fa-
 ther, the Word or Son, and the Holy
 Ghost

“ Ghost or Spirit; to each of whom we there
 “ find distinct personal Actions ascribed, and
 “ personal Expressions always accomodated.
 “ Although therefore, it is beyond the Power
 “ of Human Understanding to conceive this
 “ Mystery as it is in itself; yet by Faith we
 “ believe it to be as God has represented it
 “ unto us; and this Representation we take to
 “ be a sufficient Foundation for all such Du-
 “ ties as are consequent upon or arise from
 “ the Doctrine. And because it is impossible
 “ to express our Meaning without the Use of
 “ Words, nor will any Language furnish us
 “ with other Words to express the Things of
 “ God, but such as are used to signify what
 “ we apprehend to have the nearest Correspon-
 “ dence thereto in Man; for this Reason we
 “ are forced to make Use of the Words *Per-*
 “ *sons, Substance, &c.* not that they do denote
 “ unto us the Things as they are in them-
 “ selves, for in that Respect we expressly own
 “ them to be incomprehensible; but only as
 “ they are analogically, and according to our
 “ Capacity, represented to us by God in his
 “ Holy Word, as a Foundation for several
 “ Christian Duties. And when the Son or the
 “ Holy Ghost are said to be *sent* (which was
 “ the other Objection mention’d) by *sending*
 “ it

"it is not intended, that *Directions* were given
 "them to go from one Place to another in the
 "Manner as one Man does to another, when
 "he is said to send him; but to *send*, as it
 "is thus applied to the Father or Son, signi-
 "fies an Act, in it self indeed to us incom-
 "prehensible; but as near, as may be in
 "God, corresponding to the Action of *send-
 "ing* in Man, and which, for Want of a
 "more proper Word, we are forced to ex-
 "press by the same Name. This I take to
 "be a rational Answer to those two Objec-
 "tions of the *Unitarians*, which I have above
 "proposed, and sufficient to satisfy every Man,
 "who is content with St. *Paul*, as long as he
 "is in this Life, to know the Things of God
 "in Part, &c. Nor is there any other Dif-
 "ficulty in the Holy Trinity, as it is ex-
 "pressed either in the Holy Scripture, or in
 "the Creeds and Liturgy of our Church, but
 "what in the same Manner may be fairly ac-
 "counted for *Seet. 36*. I take this Way of
 "accounting for the Attributes, Actions and
 "Persons of the Godhead to be not only in
 "itself very satisfactory; but also, if rightly
 "understood, of great Importance towards
 "putting an End to all those Disputes that
 "have arisen in the World about these Mat-
 "ters;

"ters ; and if the Reader is not satisfy'd with
 "what I have here said, I desire him, before
 "he passes his Censure, to have Recourse to
 "the School Divines, who have handled this
 "Subject ; particularly I recommend to him
 "*Tho. Aquinas contra Gent. cum Com. Fran.*
 "*de Silo. Lib. 1. Cap. 32, 33, 34.* where he will
 "find these three Things expressly maintain'd.
 "First, That when we make use of the same
 "Words in speaking of God, and of any o-
 "ther Thing ; such Words are not to be un-
 "derstood univocally, or in one and the same
 "Signification, the Nature and Essence of
 "God not being of the same Kind or Sort
 "with that of any other Thing whatsoever.
 "Secondly, That yet such Words are not to
 "be understood to be meerly equivocal, or
 "the same in Sound only, but without any
 "Manner of Agreement in their Sense or Sig-
 "nification. For there may and ought to be
 "an Agreement, though not an universal
 "one, in the Signification of every Word,
 "that is applied to God and any Creature ;
 "that is to say, when at any Time we speak
 "of God in the same Words as we do of a
 "Creature, the Use of such Words ought not
 "to be altogether groundless and precarious,
 "but founded upon some just and sufficient
 "Reason.

“ Reason. Thirdly, Therefore that such Words
 “ are always to be understood *analogically*, that
 “ is to say, with some reasonable and well-
 “ grounded Resemblance of Signification in
 “ such their different Application: For since
 “ in this Life we have no immediate or sen-
 “ sible Knowledge of God, but only trace as
 “ much as we can of his Nature and Attri-
 “ butes from those Effects, which immediate-
 “ ly incur into our Senses and Understanding,
 “ and of which we can demonstrate him to be
 “ the Cause; either we must have no Con-
 “ ception at all of such his Nature and Attri-
 “ butes, or else we must conceive them, as well
 “ as we can (and in such a Manner, as may
 “ be a sufficient Foundation for our Duty)
 “ from some faint and dark Resemblance,
 “ which we apprehend to be between them
 “ and those of some of his Creatures. Or if
 “ the Reader is not willing to trouble him-
 “ self with the difficult Terms of the Schools;
 “ let him read his Grace the Lord Archbishop
 “ of *Dublin's* Sermon, entitled *Divine Pre-*
 “ *destination and Foreknowledge consistent with*
 “ *the Freedom of Man's Will*, where he will
 “ find this Matter very clearly and satisfacto-
 “ rily handled.” So much I thought proper
 to transcribe from the excellent small Tract
 above-

above-mentioned, because therein this Matter is clearly represented, and it is entirely agreeable to my own Sentiments. I need add no more (having already, I am afraid, too much trespassed upon your Patience) but that I am with the greatest Respect,

SIR,

Your most obliged humble Servant, &c.

F I N I S.

have mentioned, because therein this Master
 is clearly represented, and it is entirely agree-
 able to my own Sentiments. I need add no
 more (having already said too much
 on this subject) but that I am
 with the greatest

